(d) whether it is also a fact that in January 2000, several Solar-Charge Batteries and Solar Plates were stolen from the same site which is regarded as a high-security zone; and

(e) whether the culprits were detected and apprehended?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) On 21st January, 2000, while carrying out regular maintenance, two camera fitted on 12m high towers were found missing.

(b) and (c) Unit Court of Inquiry was conducted and FIR was lodged with the local police. However, the culprits have not been arrested so far.

(d) From May to July 2000, three sets of Solar Panel Lighting Equipment with 12 volt batteries were stolen from water route to wheeler Islands.

(e) Yes, Sir. Dhamra police have apprehended the culprits.

IAF keeping Apace with Modernisation

1186. SHRI K.M. SAIFULLAH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a top defence committee has stated that a large part of country's air force an equipment would become obsolete over the next decade;

(b) whether forty per cent Indian Air Force fleet will have to be replaced over next ten years keeping in view the increased flying accidents of late; and

(c) what steps are being taken to augment the fleet strength in time?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) The Seventh Report of the Standing Committee on Defence, dwelling on the Modernisation of the Air Force, has observed that the Indian Air Force may face depletion of certain equipment, due to obsolescence, in a matter of a few years. Some aircraft would be technically and operationally reaching obsolescence in near future. The IAF has formulated a Modernisation Plan to enhance its combat Aircraft strength in terms of quality, as well as, quantity. Plans are in hand to augment squadron force levels.

Recruitments in army from North-Eastern States

1187. SHRI KHAGEN DAS: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of recruitments at different levels in the army during the last five years;